

∴ CLAY CROSS ∴
URBAN DISTRICT.

ANNUAL REPORT

FOR 1914,

— BY —

WM. DUNCAN,

M.B., C.M., Barrister-at-Law,

— District M.O.H. —

Medical Officer's Report, 1914.

Natural and Social Conditions.

The district is a small one 1,462 acres, surrounded by the Chesterfield Rural District. It is on the western border of the East Derbyshire coal field. The town which gives its name to the district is situate on a ridge running north and south; the ridge falls away on the east to the Rother, and on the west to the Press Brook. About the rising ground on the further side of the Press Brook are many small dairy farms, and from this area is drawn the water supply of the town. On the ridge the level reaches 490 feet, O.D.; the lowest level is 325 feet.

	1901	1911	Est. Mid. 1914.
Inhabitated Houses	1574	1780	1802
Population	8358	8365	8370

Nineteen new houses were built during the year. Ten were closed by order of the Council.

Rateable Value, £22,192; Assessable Value, £15,923; General District Rate, 4s. 4d. in the £.

Two Parishes (Clay Lane and Eggstow) go to form the Urban District. Both are in the Chesterfield Union. Poor Rate is 4s. 4d. in the £.

The industry is coal mining. Many of the houses are old, of a type which Smiles commended some sixty years ago and now falling short of modern ideals. But the industry is not increasing, and sweeping changes in structural accommodation are not practicable. Besides, the district is poor, while it lives by coal, none of the coal pits to which it supplies the labour are within its assessable area.

Vital Statistics.

Births, 261—31.1 per 1,000 population per annum. An average figure—much above the County rate 1911-13—26.2.

Infant Mortality, 30 deaths—115 per 1,000 born. This is less than our average, and compares with the County average 1911-13—112.9.

Deaths, 147—17·5 per 1,000 per annum (corrected for age and sex 17·55), an average figure. County rate 1911-13—12·75.

The principal rates per 1,000 population are as under:—

All Causes Corrected for localities.	Zymotic Diseases.	Enteric Fever & Diarrhoea.	Phthisis	Other Tubercular Diseases	Respiratory Diseases (excl. Phthisis)
17·5	·7	·95	1·1	·6	3·0

With the exception of zymotic disease rate, which is low after our epidemic of measles and whooping cough in 1912-13, the figures are slightly higher than the County average. Four deaths only were uncertified.

With regard to the causes, 8 were violent deaths (not suicides) due to industrial conditions; and 10 were premature births, which under mere favourable conditions and where the advent of infant life was esteemed less of an ordinary happening, might not have appeared in the death rate at all. These two groups alone make a difference of 2·1 per 1,000 in our death rate.

The Infantile death rate is better than usual, and as the Notification of Births' Act is not yet in force here, it is interesting to record the figures of the Chesterfield Rural District where it is actually in operation.

The average figure for the Chesterfield Rural area for 10 years is 129 per 1,000 born; ours 146. Their figure this year is 113, ours 115, and Dr. Peck attributes this reduction in his area largely to the spread of knowledge and supervision following the adoption of the Notification of Births' Act. But reasoning accurately from figures is difficult; for, while the Act applied to the whole of the Chesterfield rural area, very diverse results were obtained in different parishes. Below are given the figures of several parishes adjacent or similar to our own:—

HEATH	235 deaths per 1,000 born.
ARKWRIGHT TOWN ...	213 " "
HASLAND	200 " "
ECKINGTON	115 " "
TUPTON	106 " "
STAVELEY	95 " "
PILSLEY	60 " "
MORTON	25 " "
ASHOVER	18 " "

The other figures for the Chesterfield Rural area are rather better than our own all through, due presumably to the admixture of agriculture with its mining and industrial areas:—

BIRTHS.	DEATHS.				
	All Causes	Zymotic Death	Ent. Fever & Diarrhoea	Phthisis	Other Tubercular Respiratory
31·3	14	2·04	·32	·51	·31 2·3

The matter of high mortality of the district for a number of years, particularly infant mortality, was the subject of a special report by the County Medical Officer of Health on the sanitary conditions of the district, in which special attention was given to the Housing conditions. The report was strongly adverse, and called forth a spirited reply from the Urban Council. The sequel, in the shape of a Local Government Board inquiry has taken place this month (February) when the matter was again ventilated and the report of the Inspector, Mr. G. W. Collin, is awaited with interest.

Water Supply.

This is in the hands of the Council, who acquired it by purchase many years ago. It is largely spring water, and we depend on each day for the next day's service. The only storage is an underground tank, holding three-fourths of a day's supply.

The water is obtained from—

Woferley Springs: Pure water piped direct to the tank, 40,000 galls. daily.

Bore hole: with lime and iron in solution, 35,000 galls. piped to waterworks and iron removed by aerating weirs and sand filters.

Grinders Well: Pure, 40-50,000 galls. daily, presently flowing to Northedge brook, which joins the Press brook 400 yards lower, and then 100 yards further reaches the waterworks, where the whole is treated by sand filtration. This would be all right were no pollution present, but there are two farms on the Northedge brook length and one farm and two houses just where the brooks join.

To secure the water pure and augment the supply, the Council took action and submitted schemes. The Local Government Board held an inquiry at Clay Cross on 25th November, 1913, and now the Council have secured land carrying an additional spring (15,000 galls.) near Woferley, which will be piped to the Woferley pipe, and secured also rights and land which will permit of Grinders Well water being stored in a suitable tank and piped to the adjacent bore hole pipe, which is of sufficient capacity to carry both.

During the summer of 1914 the water was conserved as much as possible by shutting off the supply at night for 2½ months. When the piping is completed, we hope to have ample supply all summer, and of the quality there is no question. It is the most palatable water which I have ever had the opportunity to taste.

Drainage and Sewerage.

The sewerage schemes installed nine years ago continue to maintain their good record. More water-closets are being added year by year, though of course there is a long way to go before we can be deemed to have adopted the water carriage system in fact as well as in principle.

Twenty-one closets were added during the year and 68 converted, making our figures:—

Pail Closets.	Water-closets.	Slopwater-closets.	Privy Middens.
None.	395	12	1407

Scavenging.

The Council deal with six out of eight districts themselves. Of the other two, one (Danesmoor) is let at 4s. 9d. per house, and the other (Holmgate) at 3s. 6d. The ashpits are emptied on an average every two months. The men emptying the ashpits work from 4 a.m. till 11 a.m., and no night soil is allowed to remain after 11 a.m.

The carters' hours are from 5 a.m. till 2 p.m., and they have instructions to clean everything up "as early as possible."

The new tip off Chesterfield Road becomes less and less of an eyesore day by day, and may in time be considered an improvement per se. The allotment gardens have not yet been reached, the depth of the embankment of the road being now very considerable.

Inspection of the District.

Ten statutory and 572 informal notices were given by the Sanitary Inspector during the year. The health of the Inspector has prevented him giving as full time to the work as he would have wished, and the house to house records have not been materially increased.

Bye-Laws, &c.

The new bye-laws have now been drafted and settled, and are with the Local Government Board for approval. They cover Streets and Buildings, Lodging Houses, Slaughter Houses, Nuisances; also Regulations under Cowsheds and Dairies Orders.

There are now no van dwellers, no cellar dwellings, and the occupation of the entresol floors has been done away.

Tripe boiling and blood boiling are carried on, but so as to cause no offence to adjoining occupiers.

Public Elementary Schools.

These are as last year, structurally. The new Higher Grade School has not been started. Plans for the conversion of all the privies to W.C.'s at the schools have been passed, and tenders are now under consideration. Before next annual report comes to be written they should have been in use some time.

There was no closure for infectious disease.

The School Medical Inspector is Dr. Carruthers, a whole-time Officer of the County Council.

Food.

There are 26 cowkeepers on the Register, milking some 80 cows. Nearly all sell milk retail, or sell to another who retails. There are no milk-sellers who are not cowkeepers, and the milk sold is produced in the district.

Our new regulations specify 600 c.f. per cow, but about half the cowsheds have very much less than this, and these smaller sheds are those which often offend further by blocking with straw or sacks actual air and light inlets.

One cow was destroyed on account of Tuberculosis. Seventy inspections were made of the 26 sheds. Several were late with whitewashing, several had air-holes blocked (as above), and two had the manure much too near the cowhouse and obstructing the yard.

The two markets and the slaughter-houses are regularly inspected. There are 9 slaughter-houses. Fifty inspections were made and 5 notices, chiefly whitewashing, served.

Thirty-four tins of food were surrendered and condemned.

There are four Bakehouses. Two have had to be reminded about whitewashing. One is a model bakery, three are in congested areas and cramped for light and space, and in one of these not enough use is made of such facilities as are available.

Housing.

This matter has been much to the fore this year on account of the Report of the County Council to the Local Government Board, and the Urban Council's disagreement with its tenor.

Improvement certainly has taken place year by year, but slow owing, as previously stated in this report, to the slackening of trade and the dependence of the town on the coal trade and oldish pits for its continuance.

As stated in last year's report, we are largely in the hands of the principal property owners (the Clay Cross Co. Ltd.). The effect of their influence is undeniable, and the standard they can be induced to maintain sets the measure for others. The repair department of the Company, as stated, recommenced operations at the end of 1913, and Pleasant Row, Chapel Row, Tunnel Row and Long Rows have been improved, particularly by the substitution of W.C.'s for privies. Similar movement has been observed in other quarters. All the back-to-back houses have been made through, with the exception of 8 in King Street and 14 in Eyre Street, and these are in process of conversion.

Conversion of Privies to W.C.'s has also been proceeding in Dore's Yard and Clay Lane.

Under Sec. 17 of the Housing & Town Planning Act, work has not been as complete as it might have been owing to illness of the Sanitary Inspector.

Houses Inspected	50
Unfit for Human Habitation	15
Representations to Local Authority	15
Closing Orders Made	14
Repaired without Closing Order	1
Rapaired after Closing Order	7
Number Closed	10

(for 9 of these Orders were made in 1913).

There are no one-roomed houses, and a few are two or three-roomed; most of the old property has four rooms, and the newer cottage property six rooms. Those built last year have baths in the cottages.

There were specific cases of overcrowding, but these were checked as discovered, and there has not during the year been difficulty in re-arrangement.

Now, owing to the war, and the absence of some 600 men, there is no overcrowding, or perhaps, it would be more correct to say, there should be none, and any offenders should be penalised.

In several large yards uncleanly conditions remain, on account of their unpaved condition. A coating of asphalt would effect great improvement in the property, besides adding materially to the comfort and health of the occupiers.

New houses are under the supervision of the Surveyor.

Factories and Workshop.

There are 11 Factories (with mechanical power) and some 35 Workshops and places. Three notices were served, after notice from Inspector. The notices were for want of cleanliness. There is one contractor, supplying an annual list of outworkers.

Infectious Disease.

This was not prevalent during the year. The following cases were reported :—

Diphtheria	17	Removed to Hospital	1
Erysipelas	8	„ „	0
Scarlatina	7	„ „	5
Puerperal Fever...	1	„ „	1
Ophthalmia	4		
Tuberculosis (Pulm.)	9	Three Shelters and Dispensary available for patients.	
„ (other)	10		

There was nothing in the nature of an epidemic. The cases were isolated and dealt with as they arose.

Formalin disinfection by Sanitary Inspector is the routine practice.

Further Work Required.

Additional houses are required in order to provide sufficient to allow the Council to close those needing closure without turning the occupiers on the streets or causing overcrowding. Who should provide these houses is another matter. Private enterprise, if possible; if not the duty falls to the Council, as the guardians of the public health. The new houses built last year and those promised for this, would indicate that in the opinion of those who know, Clay Cross, like John Bull, is not played out yet.

Adoption of Water Closets.—The Council has adopted the principle, and conversion is proceeding; it is necessary to see that no slackening takes place, and that this necessary work is carried through. The figures are 1,400 privies to 400 closets, so there is still work to be done.

Paving of Back Yards.—This has been adopted in many cases, but there are a large number of yards yet where the insanitary mud surface still prevails.

Mortality Rates.—Each of the above needs when fulfilled will do something to reduce our mortality rates to a normal figure, and while one may note and comment on the diverse figures in the parishes of the Chesterfield Rural Council, there is no doubt that the dissemination of information by trained nurses among expectant mothers and help and advice given after birth, do much to prevent wastage of infant life. I am pleased to record that the Council is in sympathy with this Act (Notification of Births), and it is only the further duty of conserving the ratepayers' money which has prevented its adoption. But when, as is foreshadowed, the County is prepared for small areas to supply nurses (either attached to school inspection or otherwise) for this purpose, the Council will be only too pleased to fall into line and accept the responsibility and pay its proportionate share for service rendered.

WM. DUNCAN,

District M.O.H.

